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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

be indulged in. Library books, periodicals and current literature is best for growing children. Of course the bicycle cannot be neglected, and \$16 to \$80 is required for that. Skates cost \$1.50 to \$5, sleds \$1 to \$10. Carts are favored by smaller boys, and for wealthy youngsters a pony and village cart is something to delight in. Boats cost any price, from \$18 to many thousands and some smaller plain kinds, popularly known as "cat boats" may be made by a good carpenter for a very small sum.

Little girls like dolls. Lovely china, bisque and wax dolls cost all the way from 50 cents to \$25, the latter being almost as large as the baby in the cradle. These dolls may be bought full dressed or with a single cloth slip. Some firms make a specialty of mechanical toys. There are walking dolls, mamma dolls with babies in perambulators that cry and struggle when the wheels go around as though determined to get out of the carriage. There are dolls that sing costing from \$2 to \$8. Indestructible, jointed and rubber dolls. For these fastidious little creatures there are shoes, 15 cents, slippers, 50 cents, gaiters, 75 cents, stockings all prices, hats from 25 cents to \$2.50 each. Furs 50 cents to \$2. Sets of jewelry, 25 cents to \$2. Dressing sets, combs, brushes, etc., 25 cents to \$1. Dolls school bags, waterproof cloaks, and many other useful articles complete the wardrobe.

MUNKACSY'S painting, "Christ before Pilate," one of the most pretentious pictures of the times, has been exhibited in this city for the past month, sufficiently long for the public to discover and discuss its merits. There is much to commend, there are likewise some things to criticize; it is a marvelous work, and will doubtless be considered, and justly so, one of the strongest productions of existing artists, yet in the main and in the general effect it is disappointing.

The conception is its strongest feature; the realistic presentation of a scene in which all Christendom has an interest, and one that has heretofore been presented only as an ideal, must excite new feelings, new comments and, possibly, adverse criticism. The central figure, Christ, is simple, plain and worldly, giving the idea of a man exhausted and tired with travel and labor and fatigue, resigned as much through this fatigue, apparently, as from any higher thought to whatsoever fate might have for him, he is the realization of what we should expect a man to be who had suffered his privations and trials for three years, his physical condition is there shown to be as nearly natural as common sense would indicate that it must have been; with his mental condition this picture, as we take it, has no concern. Whether the disappointment expressed regarding this figure comes from the lack of a spiritual atmosphere heretofore given the character, we will not say, although it seems from a strictly worldly view there can be no adverse criticism upon it. Judgment upon the work would be more just if the religious element were entirely eliminated from the mind.

The figure of Pilate is dignified, though not sufficiently so; it is earnest and yet a little trifling. Decision is marked in his countenance and uncertainty is marked in his hands.

The characters that complete the picture and compose a background to the interest of the two prominent participants, are mostly excellent, Caiaphas being noticeably the best drawn and most life-like on the canvas, while the man whose eagerness to see has secured him a footing upon a bench, where he leans against the wall, is the worst. Many of the minor heads are admirable and while, as we have said, there is some degree of disappointment in its entirety, it would be difficult to indicate which detail is lacking, and it stamps Munkacsy an artist of great talent and great ability.

CHRISTMAS DECORATION.—The series of illustrations on page 89 are suggestive of decorations suitable for this season. The background of most of the pieces should be of suitably colored plush. The figure in the lower corner is intended to represent a moss cross, the rays in gilt, the wreath in laurel leaves, a palm leaf behind, as shown, and a ribbon extending across bearing the legend. Next to this the shield of cardboard bears a bunch of mistletoe and holly, backed by two crossed palms, and having a wreath of laurel gracefully draped across its face. This piece would be suitable to put over a pillar or column or at the juncture of two arches. In the bell panel, two bells, as shown, may be cut from pasteboard and slightly repousseed or hammered out from behind, so as to give them a somewhat rounded appearance. The ribbon may be disposed as fancy suggests, the mistletoe and palm added, and over all a stuffed bird perched upon one of the bells. The upper piece, showing a wreath encircling the figures "86" may be realistically treated only in the laurel and the drapery hanging therefrom. This is also the case with the "All hail, merry Xmas" panel, which is entirely painted, excepting the bunch of mistletoe and holly at the corner. The tall panel bears a golden disc, is surmounted by two stuffed birds, is wound about with a ribbon containing the inscription, and has across its face a branch of mistletoe. It is intended that natural leaves, mosses, etc., be used in these decorations.

CHRISTMAS BOOKS.

IN view of the coming holidays and the gifts which will be merrily exchanged, HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & Co. have prepared a finely illustrated edition of the poems of Thomas Baily Aldrich, bound in cloth, gilt edged, and magnificently printed. The poems of Mr. Aldrich are too well known and too widely admired to require particular notice here, but we would gladly call attention to the fact that this superb edition contains all of those poems which were previously issued separately, as "Cloth of Gold," "Interludes," "Spring in New England," "Friar Jerome's Beautiful Book," and "Sonnets," both the first and second series. There are twenty-nine exquisite illustrations by Marcus Waterman, F. D. Millet, W. L. Taylor, W. L. Metcalf, E. H. Garrett, and others of equal note, perhaps the most striking being "Moonrise at Sea," "Up from the dark the morn begins to creep," by W. F. Halsall, a picture which carries the thought clear across the far sweep of the ever restless ocean, even as a true moonrise over the waves is ever mysteriously grand. Nothing could be more charming than a holiday gift of this book of fantastic, unique, witty, pathetic and delicate poems, rich in human emotion and intellectual culture.

FROM TICKNOR & Co. come two volumes utterly dissimilar. The one massive, superb, rich and elegant, is a tome to be cared for with admiration and painstaking nicety, since it is bound and printed, illustrated and made in the most costly and beautiful manner. We refer to "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," by Sir Walter Scott, in the finest edition it has ever been our pleasure to see. The cover, ornamented with heraldic devices, is of a deep gray, picked out with scarlet and gold, the Minstrel's harp forming the device which ornaments the head of the cover. It would be difficult to describe the treasures of illustration which render the volume so valuable, and which so notably add to the profound interest of the poem. Doubtless many adults of the present generation have never read this rare, old work, which must ever win a reiterated fame. In this sumptuous dress, read when winter fires burn blithely on the Christmas hearth, the story and poetry and art of the great writer will have an unbounded attraction and gain new praise and admiration. By all means seek this exquisite volume when making a tour of the book shops.

The other issue is a truly "handy volume," entitled "Light on the Hidden Way." It is edited by Rev. James Freeman Clark, in one of the most non-committal prefaces that a clever author could devise. The book purports to be an account of interviews held between a lady and a great many people who are dead. Some of these people were neighbors of hers and some were strangers, but although they are all buried, she says she sees them, hears them, talks with them, teaches them, comforts them and helps them to rise out of a slough of spiritual despondency, weakness, ignorance or vice, into a state of spiritual progress, advancement and final joy. She says they come and listen to her family prayers and readings. Some of them are physical invalids (or believe they are), and lie on her lounge or bed, day in and day out. Some of them she has seen converted and join the church. This ceremony she saw go on in her own church, in the air, somewhere between the people's heads and the roof. She saw a larger congregation in the air than in the seats. She says she supposes these dead people come to her because they cannot bear to associate with spirits purer than themselves, that they are still so mortal and of earth earthy, that they prefer contact with a living being. As the author says she is not a Spiritualist, her book is certainly a curious one. As far as its teaching goes, we can only understand that the other world is a much more disagreeable place than this.

A BEAUTIFUL book for the holiday season is that given us by CASSELL & Co. (New York), in Walter Scott's poem "Christmas in the Olden Time," illustrated under the supervision of George T. Andrew, by Edmund H. Garrett, Harry Fenn, J. Steeple Davis, George A. Teel, Henry Sandham, Childe Hassan and H. P. Barnes. The words of the poem are lettered throughout by the artist, the right hand page bearing an illustration appropriate to the verse, with a suitable border serving as a background printed in a light tone. The left hand page contains the verse, surrounded by symbols suggestive of its meaning. There are two colors used, the paper is a heavy enamelled plate, the presswork is clear and clean, the binding, in three colors and gold, rich and neat. For a holiday present to one who has any disposition for an artistic work, no better volume could be selected.

As a companion folio to character sketches from Charles Dickens, CASSELL & Co. (New York), have issued "Character Sketches from Thackeray," by Frederick Barnard, reproduced in photogravure and printed by Goupil & Co., Paris. It embraces six plates, portraying Col. Newcome, Major Penderennis, Becky Sharp, Major Dobbin, The Little Sister and Captain Costigan, finished in the very finest style of work and bound in portfolio form. It makes a valuable and unique Christmas present.